The Columbia River
Improving Water Quality

Idaho DEQ, Oregon DEQ, Washington Dept. of Ecology, and US EPA Region 10
In coordination with the Columbia Basin Tribes
Joint Fact Sheet #2, Fall 2001

Columbia/Snake River Mainstem TMDL Process and Schedule

Background

The states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington and EPA Region 10 are working in coordination with the Columbia Basin Tribes to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. A TMDL is a technical analysis resulting in a determination of quantities of a given pollutant (load) that can be released into a given waterbody each day while still maintaining Water Quality Standards (WQS). A TMDL also allocates responsibilities to "contributors" for reductions in the pollutant load that are necessary to achieve WQS. TMDLs are often referred to as Water Quality Improvement Plans.

Most of the Columbia River Mainstem and the Lower Snake River Mainstem fail to meet state and/or tribal Water Quality Standards for critical periods of time (mainly in the spring and summer months) for both water temperature and total dissolved gas. The Columbia/Snake Mainstem TMDLs will identify the sources of temperature and TDG causing or contributing to water quality impairment, and allocate responsibility for TDG and temperature reductions needed to achieve WQS.

Four separate but related TMDLs are being developed to achieve this objective: 1) Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL 2) Lower Columbia River Total Dissolved Gas TMDL 3) Mid Columbia TDG TMDL, and 4) Lower Snake River. This fact sheet lays out the process and schedule for each of these TMDLs.

Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL

The geographic scope of the Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL includes the Mainstem Snake River from river mile (RM) 188 to its confluence with the Columbia River, and the Mainstem of the Columbia River, from the Canadian Border to Astoria Bridge at the River mouth. EPA has agreed to take the lead on this effort, but it will work closely with the states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington and ~~in consultation and coordination~~ with the Columbia Basin Tribes. The Temperature TMDL is expected to be completed by December of 2002, and will proceed according to the following timeline:

- Workshop on Water Quality Modeling – July 2001
- Public Workshop on Temperature Problem Assessment – Fall 2001
- Public Informational Workshop on Loading Capacity and Allocations – Winter 2001 - 2002
- Draft Temperature TMDL for Public Review and Comment – Summer 2002
- Public Meeting on Draft Temperature TMDL – Summer 2002
- Final Temperature TMDL issued – December 2002

Lower Columbia TMDL

The geographic scope of the Lower Columbia Total Dissolved Gas TMDL includes the Columbia River Mainstem from its point of entry into Eastern Oregon to its mouth at the Pacific Ocean.

Because the Columbia River forms the border between the states of Oregon and Washington, these two states will share the lead on developing this TMDL. The states will work closely with the EPA. The states of Oregon and Idaho will ultimately issue the Lower Columbia Total Dissolved Gas TMDL.

The final Oregon/Washington Lower Columbia TDG TMDL is scheduled for completion by early 2002, and will proceed according to the following timeline:

- Oregon Preliminary Draft TDG TMDL for informal public comment – July 2001
- Public Information Workshop on TDG TMDL process and schedule – Fall 2001
- Formal public hearing on Draft TDG TMDL – Winter 2002
- Final Oregon/Washington TDG TMDL submitted to EPA – Spring 2002

Mid Columbia/Lake Roosevelt and Lower Snake River Total Dissolved Gas TMDLs

The geographic scope of the Lower Snake River TDG TMDL includes the mainstem Snake River from the Clearwater River to its confluence with the Columbia River, and the Columbia River Mainstem TDG TMDL will address the mainstem of the Columbia River from Grand Coulee Dam to the confluence of the Snake River.

Washington will take the lead on developing the TDG TMDL for the portions of the Columbia and Snake that flow through Washington, and EPA will take the lead on developing the TDG TMDL for any river segments that run through tribal waters, including Lake Roosevelt.

The final Mid Columbia TDG TMDL is scheduled for completion by December 2002. The Lower Snake River TDG TMDL may be finalized as early as August of 2002. These work efforts will complement one another and will proceed according to the following timeline:

- Public informational workshop on TDG TMDL process and schedule – October 2001
- Draft Lower Snake TDG TMDL –Spring 2002
- Final Draft Lower Snake TDG TMDL –Summer 2002
- Final Lower Snake TDG TMDL submitted to EPA – Summer 2002
- Draft Mid-Columbia TDG TMDL – Summer 2002
- Final Draft Lower Snake TDG TMDL – Summer 2002
- Final Mid-Columbia TDG TMDL submitted to EPA – December 2002

****

For Workshop Materials, Fact Sheets, Documents, Maps and other Information
Log onto the Internet at
Http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/columbiamainstemtmdl.htm

Or call
Mary Lou Soscia,
US EPA Columbia River Coordinator, Portland
(503) 326-5873
or
John Osterberg
Western Governors' Association, Denver
(303) 623-9378